

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202-6140

***FISCAL YEAR 2002
APPLICATION FOR NEW DIRECT GRANTS UNDER THE
VOLUNTARY PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM***

CFDA 84.361

FORM APPROVED
OMB No. 1890-009 **Exp. Date: 6/30/05**



DATED MATERIAL - OPEN IMMEDIATELY

CLOSING DATE: August 19, 2002

VOLUNTARY PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM APPLICATION PACKAGE

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<p>Note: Copies of standard forms are available on the U.S. Department of Education's website at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OCFO/grants/appforms.html.</p>

SECTION A

INTRODUCTION

Dear Colleague Letter

Notification of Intent to Apply

Dear Colleague:

Thank you for your interest in the Voluntary Public School Choice program, authorized under sections 5241-5248 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Included in this application package are the instructions and forms needed to submit an application to the Department. Please take the time to review the authorizing statute, the applicable priorities, and all of the application instructions thoroughly.

This program will support efforts to establish or expand programs of public school choice for parents and their children. By statute, the Secretary will give priority funding to projects that:

- Would provide a wide variety of educational choices for all students in participating schools;
- Would provide a substantial impact in allowing students in low-performing schools to attend higher-performing schools; or
- Would implement an inter-district approach to expanding public school choice.

Grantees must develop their voluntary public school choice programs with the involvement of parents, the community to be served, and individuals who will be responsible for implementing the program. Students' participation must be voluntary. If more students apply to participate in a program than can be accommodated, the grantee must use a lottery process for selecting students.

Grantees must use grant funds to provide participating students with transportation (or to pay their transportation costs). Grantees may also use grant funds for the following activities:

- To plan or design a voluntary public choice program (1-year maximum);
- To provide tuition transfer payments to public elementary or secondary schools for students who transfer from low-performing schools to a higher-performing schools under this program;
- To carry out capacity-enhancing activities that enable higher-demand elementary or secondary schools to accommodate transfer requests under this program; and
- To carry out public education campaigns to inform students and parents about the program.

The Department will conduct an evaluation of the program that addresses, among other things, the extent to which the program promotes educational equity and excellence; the characteristics of student participants; and the effects of the program on the academic achievement of participating students, with a specific focus on students who transfer from low-performing schools to higher-performing schools. Applicants must provide in their application a description of the information collection that the applicant plans to conduct in order to participate in the evaluation and to meet the requirements of 34 CFR 75.590, which requires the recipient of an award to evaluate at least annually its progress in meeting the purposes of the program, and the effects of the program on the participants in the project.

In accordance with Federal regulations, you may request funding for a multi-year award. If you decide to do so, you must explain why a multi-year project is needed and provide a detailed budget for each year of the proposed multi-year project. The Department will establish, at the time of the initial award, the funding levels for each year of the grant award. If you are selected for an award, the Department will review the budgets for all of the project's years at the same time. This means that future continuation awards will rely heavily on project performance reports, which you will need to submit near the end of each budget period. We will notify you when the reports are due.

Please call Ms. Iris Lane at (202) 260-1999, if you have any questions about the program after reviewing the application package. We look forward to receiving your application and appreciate your efforts to meet the educational needs of children and youth by expanding the options available to them through voluntary public school choice.

Sincerely,

/S/

Susan B. Neuman, Ed.D.
Assistant Secretary for
Elementary and Secondary Education

Voluntary Public School Choice Program Intent to Apply

The Department will use an external peer review process to evaluate applications for the Voluntary Public School Choice Program, and to identify applications to be recommended for award. The quality of that process will depend, in part, on our ability to secure an appropriate number of reviewers, accommodations for them, and space in which they will work. Our ability to do this will depend, in turn, upon advance knowledge of the approximate number of applications we will receive.

For this reason, if your State educational agency (SEA) or local educational agency (LEA) intends to apply for funding under this program either individually or in partnership with other SEAs, LEAs, public, nonprofit, or for-profit organizations, we ask that you provide us the following information:

Name of Primary Applicant: _____

Name of Contact Person(s): _____

Address: _____

City, State, and Zip Code: _____

Telephone: _____ *Fax Number:* _____

E-mail address: _____

Expected Category of Application: (Please check, as appropriate)

- ☐ One or more State Educational Agencies
- ☐ One or more Local Educational Agencies
- ☐ One or more SEAs in partnership with one or more LEAs or public, nonprofit, or for-profit organizations
- ☐ One or more LEAs in partnership with one or more public, nonprofit or for-profit organizations

Please return this form on or before August 5, 2002 to:

*Ms. Iris A. Lane
School Improvement Programs
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 3C156
Washington, DC 20202-6140*

Responses may be sent by fax to (202) 205-5630 or by e-mail to iris.lane@ed.gov.

The Department requests this information solely to help it prepare for the peer review process. It will not be used in the review of your application. If you inform the Department of your intent to apply, but subsequently decide not to do so, please notify the Department accordingly. Not completing this form does not prevent you from applying for a grant.

SECTION B

LEGAL AND REGULATORY DOCUMENTS

Application Notice

Authorizing Statute

Application Notice

Please refer to:

<http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/announcements/>

4000-01-U

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

(CFDA No. 84.361)

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education --

VOLUNTARY PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM

Notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2002.

PURPOSE OF PROGRAM: This program provides grants to eligible applicants to assist them in establishing or expanding a program of voluntary public school choice in order to provide parents, particularly parents whose children attend low-performing schools, with greater choice in their children's education.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: (a) one or more State educational agencies (SEAs); (b) one or more local educational agencies (LEAs); (c) one or more SEAs in partnership with one or more LEAs or other public, for-profit, or non-profit entities; or (d) one or more LEAs in partnership with one or more public, for-profit, or non-profit entities.

APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE: July 5, 2002.

DEADLINE FOR TRANSMITTAL OF APPLICATIONS: August 19, 2002.

DEADLINE FOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW: September 18, 2002.

ESTIMATED AVAILABLE FUNDS: \$25,000,000.

ESTIMATED RANGE OF AWARDS: \$2,500,000 - \$5,000,000 per year.

ESTIMATED AVERAGE SIZE OF AWARDS: \$3,750,000 per year.

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF AWARDS: 5 - 10.

Note: These estimates are for the guidance of potential applicants. The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

PROJECT PERIOD: Up to five years.

Note: Not more than 12 months may be used to plan and design a program.

E-MAIL NOTIFICATION OF INTENT TO APPLY FOR FUNDING: The Department will be able to develop a more efficient process for reviewing grant applications if it has a better understanding of the number of entities that intend to apply for funding under this competition. Therefore, the Secretary strongly encourages each potential applicant for this program to notify the Department by e-mail that it intends to submit an application for funding. The Secretary requests that this e-mail notification be sent no later than August 5, 2002. The e-mail notification should be sent to Ms. Iris Lane at Iris.Lane@ed.gov. Applicants that fail to provide this e-mail notification still may apply for funding.

PAGE LIMITS: The Program Narrative (Part IV of the application) is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. You must limit Part IV to the equivalent of no more than 50 pages, using the following standards:

- A "page" is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and on both sides.

- Double space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs.
- Use a font that is either 12-point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch).

The page limit does not apply to Part I, the cover sheet; Part II, the table of contents; Part III, the project abstract and application requirements; Part V, the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; Part VI, the assurances and certifications; or Part VII, the proof of eligibility. However, you must include all of the program narrative in Part IV.

Our reviewers will not read any pages of your application that --

- Exceed the page limit if you apply these standards; or
- Exceed the equivalent of the page limit if you apply other standards.

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS AND STATUTE: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 82, 85, 86, 86, 97, 98, and 99. (b) Title V, Part B, Subpart 3 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. 7225-7225g.

WAIVER OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING: In accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553), it is the practice of the Secretary to offer interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed rules. Ordinarily, this practice might have applied to one or more of the priorities and requirements in this notice. Section 437(d)(1) of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), however, exempts rules that apply to the first competition under a new or substantially revised program from this requirement. Because this competition is the first Voluntary Public School Choice program competition under the newly reauthorized ESEA, it qualifies as a new competitive grant program and is exempt from notice and comment rulemaking. The Secretary, in accordance with section 437(d)(1) of GEPA, to ensure timely awards, has decided to forego public comment. This notice applies to the FY 2002 competition only.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS: An application submitted to the Secretary must include the following:

- (1) A description of the program for which the eligible entity seeks funds and the goals for the program;
- (2) A description of how and when parents of students in the area to be served by the program will be notified of the existence of the program and of the program's availability, and provided a clear explanation of how the program will operation, as

- a clear explanation of how the program will operate, as required under section 5245(a)(2) of the ESEA;
- (3) A description of how students will be selected for the program;
 - (4) A description of how the program will be coordinated with, and will complement and enhance, other related Federal and non-Federal programs administered by the applicant or applicants;
 - (5) If the program is to be carried out by a partnership, the name of each partner and a description of the partner's responsibilities; and
 - (6) A description of the information collection that the applicant plans to conduct in order to meet the requirements of 34 CFR 75.590 and to participate in any evaluation of the program that the Secretary conducts under section 5246(b) of the ESEA. Section 75.590 requires the recipient of an award to evaluate at least annually its progress in meeting the purposes of the program, and the effect of the program on the participants in the project. Section 5246(b) of the ESEA authorizes the Secretary to conduct evaluations that examine, among other things, how, and the extent to which, projects promote educational equity and excellence; the characteristics of students participating in projects; and the effect of projects

- (7) on academic achievement of students participating in the projects, including students who move from schools identified for school improvement under section 1116 of the ESEA to schools not so identified.

Note: The application requirements described above must be addressed in the Project Abstract and Application Requirements section (Part III) of your application.

PRIORITY POINTS: Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2) of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations, the Secretary will award a maximum of up to 5 priority points for each criterion the applicant meets, and a maximum of up to 15 priority points for applications that meet all of the following criteria:

(a) **Wide Variety of Choices (up to 5 points).** The project would provide a wide variety of choices to all students in participating schools. In determining whether a proposed project would provide a wide variety of choices, the Department will consider, among other things, the characteristics of the school district. For example, a wide variety of choices in a small rural district may differ from a wide variety of choices in a large urban school district.

(b) **Substantial Impact on Students in Low-Performing Schools (up to 5 points).** The project would, through various choice options, have a substantial impact in allowing students in low-performing schools to

attend higher-performing schools. In determining whether a proposed project would have a substantial impact in allowing students in low-performing schools to attend higher-performing schools, the Department will consider, among other things, the percentage of students in low-performing schools who would be able to attend higher-performing schools under the jurisdiction of the applicant(s).

Note: The term "low-performing school" means a public elementary or secondary school that has failed to make adequate yearly progress, as described in section 1111(b) of the ESEA, for two or more consecutive years.

(c) **Partnership/Interdistrict Approach** (up to 5 points). The project would establish a partnership that implements an interdistrict approach to carrying out a public school choice program.

These priorities are specified in the authorizing statute for the program (see section 5244 of the ESEA). The priority points are in addition to any points the applicant earns under the selection criteria

listed below. The Secretary may select an application that meets a priority over an application of comparable merit that does not meet the priority. The maximum number of points an application may earn based on the priority points and the selection criteria is 115 points.

SELECTION CRITERIA: The Secretary will use the selection criteria in 34 CFR 75.210 and selection criteria based on statutory provisions to evaluate applications for new grants under this competition. The

maximum possible score for all of the selection criteria is 100 points. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parenthesis with the criterion. The criteria are as follows:

(a) **Need for the Project (up to 10 points)**. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the magnitude of the need for the services to be provided or the activities to be carried out by the proposed project.

(b) **Significance (up to 15 points)**. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (1) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement.
- (2) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services (i.e., choice options) that address the needs of the target population.
- (3) The potential replicability of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings.

(c) **Quality of Project Design (up to 40 points)**. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In

determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (1) The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental involvement and ensures that parents have high quality information about their choices.
- (2) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.
- (3) The extent to which the design for implementing and evaluating the proposed project will result in information to guide possible replication of project activities or strategies, including information about the effectiveness of the approach or strategies employed by the project.
- (4) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.
- (5) The extent to which the design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.
- (6) The extent to which the proposed project will be coordinated with similar or related efforts, and with other appropriate community, State, and Federal resources.

(d) Quality of Project Services (up to 25 points). The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project. In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (1) The likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will lead to improvements in the achievement of students, as measured against rigorous academic standards.
- (2) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the effective collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services.
- (3) The quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(e) Quality of Management Plan (up to 10 Points). The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within

budget, including whether it includes clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

Required Use of Funds

An eligible entity that receives a grant under this subpart must use grant funds to provide students selected to participate in the program with transportation services or to pay the cost of transportation to and from the public elementary schools and secondary schools, including, if applicable, charter schools, that the students choose to attend under the program.

Permissible Uses of Funds

An eligible entity that receives a grant under this subpart may use the grant funds for --

- (a) Planning or designing a program (for not more than 1 year);
- (b) The cost of making tuition transfer payments to public elementary schools or secondary schools to which students transfer under the program.
- (c) The cost of capacity-enhancing activities that enable high-demand public elementary schools or secondary schools to accommodate transfer requests under the program;
- (d) The cost of carrying out public education campaigns to inform students and parents about the program; and

(e) Other costs that are reasonably necessary to implement the program.

Nonpermissible Use of Funds

An eligible entity that receives a grant under this program may not use the grant funds for school construction.

Parent and Community Involvement and Notice

In carrying out a project under this program, an eligible entity must --

(1) Develop the project with (a) the involvement of parents and others in the community to be served; and (b) individuals who will carry out the program, including administrators, teachers, principals, and other staff; and

(2) Provide to parents of students in the area to be served by the program with prompt notice of (a) the existence of the program; (b) the program's availability; and (c) a clear explanation of how the program will operate.

Selection of Students by Lottery

An eligible entity that receives a grant under this program must select students to participate in its public school choice program on the basis of a lottery, if more students apply for admission to the program than can be accommodated.

Note: For purposes of this program, a lottery is defined as a random selection process through which applicants for admission to a participating public school are admitted to the school.

Voluntary Participation

Student participation in a project funded under this program must be voluntary.

FOR APPLICATIONS OR INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Iris A. Lane, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 3C156, Washington, DC 20202-6140. Telephone: (202)260-1999. Inquiries may also be sent by e-mail to:

Iris.Lane@ed.gov

Or by FAX to: (202)205-5630. The Department intends to offer prospective applicants further information about the program and assistance in preparing applications at the following Internet site:

<http://www.ed.gov/GrantApps/#84.361>

Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain this document in an alternative format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) upon request to the contact person listed in the preceding paragraph. Individuals with disabilities may obtain a copy of the application package in an alternative format, also, by contacting that

person. However, the Department is not able to reproduce in an alternative format the standard forms included in the application package.

Electronic Access to this Document

You may view this document, as well as all other Department of Education documents published in the Federal Register, in text or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) on the Internet at the following site:

<http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/announcements/>

To use PDF, you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at this site. If you have questions about using PDF, call the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) toll free at 1-888-293-6498; or in the Washington, DC area at (202) 512-1530.

Note: The official version of a document is the document published in the Federal Register. Free Internet access to the official edition of the Federal Register and the Code of Federal Regulations is available on GPO Access at:

<http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/index.html>

PROGRAM AUTHORITY: 20 U.S.C. 7225-7225g.

Dated: July 5, 2002

/S/

Susan B. Neuman, Ed.D.,
Assistant Secretary for
Elementary and Secondary Education.

Authorizing Statute

Please refer to:

<http://www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA02/pg64.html>

Voluntary Public School Choice Program

***Title V, Part B, Subpart 3 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA),
as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. 7225-7225g***

SEC. 5241. GRANTS.

(a) AUTHORIZATION- From funds made available under section 5248 to carry out this subpart, the Secretary shall award grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible entities to enable the entities to establish or expand a program of public school choice (referred to in this subpart as a program') in accordance with this subpart.

(b) DURATION- Grants awarded under subsection (a) may be awarded for a period of not more than 5 years.

SEC. 5242. USES OF FUNDS.

(a) REQUIRED USE OF FUNDS- An eligible entity that receives a grant under this subpart shall use the grant funds to provide students selected to participate in the program with transportation services or the cost of transportation to and from the public elementary schools and secondary schools, including charter schools, that the students choose to attend under the program.

(b) PERMISSIBLE USES OF FUNDS- An eligible entity that receives a grant under this subpart may use the grant funds for —

- (1) planning or designing a program (for not more than 1 year);
- (2) the cost of making tuition transfer payments to public elementary schools or secondary schools to which students transfer under the program;
- (3) the cost of capacity-enhancing activities that enable high-demand public elementary schools or secondary schools to accommodate transfer requests under the program;
- (4) the cost of carrying out public education campaigns to inform students and parents about the program; and
- (5) other costs reasonably necessary to implement the program.

(c) NONPERMISSIBLE USES OF FUNDS- An eligible entity that receives a grant under this subpart may not use the grant funds for school construction.

(d) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES- The eligible entity may use not more than 5 percent of the funds made available through the grant for any fiscal year for administrative expenses.

SEC. 5243. APPLICATIONS.

(a) SUBMISSION- An eligible entity that desires a grant under this subpart shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

(b) CONTENTS- An application submitted under subsection (a) shall include —

- (1) a description of the program for which the eligible entity seeks funds and the goals for such program;
- (2) a description of how and when parents of students will be given the notice required under section 5245(a)(2);
- (3) a description of how students will be selected for the program;

- (4) a description of how the program will be coordinated with, and will complement and enhance, other related Federal and non-Federal projects; if the program is to be carried out by a partnership, the name of each partner and a description of the partner's responsibilities; and
- (5) such other information as the Secretary may require.

SEC. 5244. PRIORITIES.

In awarding grants under this subpart, the Secretary shall give priority to an eligible entity —

- (1) whose program would provide the widest variety of choices to all students in participating schools;
- (2) whose program would, through various choice options, have the most impact in allowing students in low-performing schools to attend higher-performing schools; and
- (3) that is a partnership that seeks to implement an interdistrict approach to carrying out a program.

SEC. 5245. REQUIREMENTS AND VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION.

(a) PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND NOTICE- In carrying out a program under this subpart, an eligible entity shall —

- (1) develop the program with —
 - (A) the involvement of parents and others in the community to be served; and
 - (B) individuals who will carry out the program, including administrators, teachers, principals, and other staff; and
- (2) provide to parents of students in the area to be served by the program with prompt notice of —
 - (A) the existence of the program;
 - (B) the program's availability; and
 - (C) a clear explanation of how the program will operate.

(b) SELECTION OF STUDENTS- An eligible entity that receives a grant under this subpart shall select students to participate in a program on the basis of a lottery, if more students apply for admission to the program than can be accommodated.

(c) VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION- Student participation in a program funded under this subpart shall be voluntary.

SEC. 5246. EVALUATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL- From the amount made available to carry out this subpart for any fiscal year, the Secretary may reserve not more than 5 percent —

- (1) to carry out evaluations;
- (2) to provide technical assistance; and
- (3) to disseminate information.

(b) EVALUATIONS- In carrying out the evaluations under subsection (a), the Secretary shall, at a minimum, address —

- (1) how, and the extent to which, the programs promote educational equity and excellence;
- (2) the characteristics of the students participating in the programs; and
- (1) the effect of the programs on the academic achievement of students participating in the programs, particularly students who move from schools identified under section 1116 to schools not so identified, and on the overall quality of participating schools and districts.

SEC. 5247. DEFINITIONS.

In this subpart:

(1) CHARTER SCHOOL- The term charter school' has the meaning given such term in section 5210.

(2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY- The term eligible entity' means —

(A) one or more State educational agencies;

(B) one or more local educational agencies; or

(C) a partnership of —

(i) one or more —

(I) State educational agencies; and

(II) local educational agencies or other public, for-profit, or nonprofit entities; or

(ii) one or more —

(I) local educational agencies; and

(II) public, for-profit, or nonprofit entities.

(3) LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOL- The term low-performing school' means a public elementary school or secondary school that has failed to make adequate yearly progress, as described in section 1111(b), for two or more consecutive years.

SEC. 5248. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

These are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this subpart \$100,000,000 for fiscal year 2002 and each of the 5 succeeding fiscal years.

SECTION C

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS AND FORMS

General Instructions

ED Form 424 and Instructions

Program Narrative Instructions, Priorities and Selection Criteria

ED Form 524 and Instructions

Assurances and Certifications

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

APPLICATION ORDER

We recommend that your application be organized in the following manner and include the following parts:

PART I: APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE (STANDARD FORM 424 (REV. 11/99))

This part of your application consists of the standard application face page on which you provide basic identifying information about the applicant and the application. Specific instructions for completing this form are located on the back of the form.

Applicants should clearly indicate, in block #4 of this form, the CFDA number of the program (e.g. 84.361) under which the application should be considered. In block #13 applicants should clearly indicate the authorized activities you are addressing. Prepare each application following the instructions, selection criteria, and program priorities as closely as possible.

PART II: TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART III: PROJECT ABSTRACT AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Include an abstract and application requirements describing the proposed project, and containing a description of the objectives and of how the project will address the unique educational needs of students served in the participating schools. Please clearly identify which priority or priorities that you are addressing in your grant proposal.

PART IV: PROGRAM NARRATIVE

This part of the application is a narrative that addresses the selection criteria that reviewers will use in evaluating individual grant proposals. The program narrative must be limited to 50 pages and should be developed and organized in alignment with the selection criteria. See Program Narrative Instructions, Selection Criteria and Priorities under this section for additional information and instructions.

PART V: BUDGET FORM AND INFORMATION (STANDARD FORM 524)

This part of your application contains information about the Federal funding you are requesting. Remember that you must provide complete budget information for each of the years (1-5) of the proposed project. Specific instructions for completing the budget form and information immediately follow the form. Keep in mind that Section C requires an itemized and detailed budget breakdown by project year (and additional explanations or comments, if more is required).

PART VI: ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS

Include all assurances and certifications, and sign each form in the appropriate section. The assurances and certifications included in the package are:

- Assurances-Nonconstruction Programs
- Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements
- Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion -- Lower Tier Covered Transaction
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

Part VII: PROOF OF ELIGIBILITY

This part of the application requires a narrative containing information regarding your eligibility to apply for this program.

REMINDER:

SUBMIT ONE ORIGINAL AND TWO COPIES OF THE COMPLETED APPLICATION.

SF 424 and Instructions Assurances and Certifications

Please refer to:

<http://ocfo.ed.gov/grntinfo/appforms.htm>

<p style="text-align: center;">PROGRAM NARRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS, SELECTION CRITERIA, AND PROGRAM PRIORITIES</p>
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PROGRAM NARRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

The program narrative should follow the order of the selection criteria and priorities listed below. Describe in detail activities planned for each funding period. As you formulate your proposed project objectives and evaluation plans, it may be helpful to review how the program narrative information is directly aligned with specific Voluntary Public School Choice Program selection criteria and program priorities. In addition, see Section E, Notice to All Applicants (Section 427 GEPA), regarding the provisions that apply to applicants for new grant awards under Department programs.

The selection criteria and program priorities below will be used to evaluate applications submitted to the Voluntary Public School Choice Program. The selection criteria are taken from the Education Department General Administrative Regulations, as codified at 34 CFR 75.201 and 75.210 (revised as of July 1, 2001). The priorities are taken from the program statute.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The program narrative should include the following sections, in this order, and, is limited to 50 pages.

(A) NEED FOR PROJECT. (Up to 10 points).

The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the magnitude of the need for the services to be provided or the activities to be carried out by the proposed project.

(B) SIGNIFICANCE. (Up to 15 points).

The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- i. The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement.
- ii. The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services (i.e., choice options) that address the needs of the target population.
- iii. The potential replicability of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings.

(C) QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN. (Up to 40 points).

The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- i. The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental involvement and ensures that parents have high-quality information about their choices.
- ii. The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.
- iii. The extent to which the design for implementing and evaluating the proposed project will result in information to guide possible replication of project activities or strategies, including information about the effectiveness of the approach or strategies employed by the project.
- iv. The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.
- v. The extent to which the design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.
- vi. The extent to which the proposed project will be coordinated with similar or related efforts, and with other appropriate community, State, and Federal resources.

(D) QUALITY OF PROJECT SERVICES. (Up to 25 points).

The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project. In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- i. The likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will lead to improvements in the achievement of students, as measured against rigorous academic standards.
- ii. The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the effective collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services.
- iii. The quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(E) QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT PLAN. (Up to 10 points).

The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including whether it includes clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

PRIORITY POINTS

THE SECRETARY GIVES A COMPETITIVE PRIORITY TO APPLICATIONS THAT MEET ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING PROGRAM STATUTORY PRIORITIES:

1. **Wide Variety of Choices (up to 5 points).** The project would provide a wide variety of choices to all students in participating schools. In determining whether a proposed project would provide a wide variety of choices, the Department will consider, among other things, the characteristics of the school district. For example, a wide variety of choices in a small rural district may differ from a wide variety of choices in a large urban school district.
2. **Substantial Impact on Students in Low-Performing Schools (up to 5 points).** The project would, through various choice options, have a substantial impact in allowing students in low-performing schools to attend higher-performing schools. In determining whether a proposed project would have a substantial impact in allowing students in low-performing to attend higher-performing schools, the Department will consider, among other things, the percentage of student in low-performing schools who would be able to attend higher-performing schools under the jurisdiction of the applicant(s).

Note: The term “low-performing school” means a public elementary or secondary school that has failed to make adequate yearly progress, as described in section 1111(b) of the ESEA, for two or more consecutive years.

3. **Partnership/Interdistrict Approach (up to 5 points).** The project would establish a partnership that implements an inter-district approach to carrying out a public school choice program.

These Priority Points are in addition to any points the applicant earns under the Selection Criteria listed above. The Secretary may select an applicant that meets the Priorities over an applicant of comparable merit that does not meet the Priorities. The *maximum* number of *Priority Points* an applicant may earn is *15 points*. The *maximum number of points* an application may earn based on *Priority Points and Selection Criteria* is *115 points*.

ED Form 524 and Instructions

Please refer to:

<http://ocfo.ed.gov/grntinfo/appforms.htm>

SECTION D

TRANSMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS & CHECKLIST

Application Transmittal Instructions

Application Checklist

APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

Mailing Address

An application sent by mail must be addressed to the U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center, Attention: CFDA #84.361 (be sure to include the correct numeric and alpha description), Room 3633, ROB#3, Washington, DC 20202-4725.

Applications Sent by Mail

To qualify for funding consideration, applications sent by mail must be received no later than 4:30 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time) on August 19, 2002. Applications received after 4:30 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time) will not be read. The announced closing date and procedures for submission will be strictly observed. Applicants should also note that the closing date applies to both the date the application is received and the hand delivery date. An applicant is encouraged to use registered or at least first-class mail.

Each late applicant will be notified that its application will not be considered.

Applications Delivered by Hand/Courier Service

Applications delivered by hand must be received by 4:30 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time) August 19, 2002 by the U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center, Room 3633, General Services Administration National Capital Region Office Building #3, 7th and D Streets SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-4725.

The Application Control Center will accept deliveries between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time) daily, except Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays.

Individuals delivering applications must use the D Street Entrance. Proper identification is necessary to enter the building.

In order for an application sent through an overnight delivery service to be considered timely, the application must be delivered before 4:30 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time).

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Does your application include the following?

_____ Cover Page (ED Form 424)

_____ Budget Form (ED Form 524)

_____ Itemized Budget and Budget Narrative

_____ Project Abstract

_____ Program Narrative, including responses to selection criteria and the competitive priorities

_____ Assurances and Certifications

☐ Assurances - Non-construction Programs

☐ Notice to All Applicants

☐ Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment; Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace requirements.

☐ Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion - Lower Tier Covered Transactions

☐ Disclosure of Lobbying Activity

☐ Certification of Eligibility

Did you ---

_____ Provide one (1) original plus two (2) copies of the application?

_____ Include all required forms with original signatures and dates?

_____ ***Mail Application To:*** ***OR***
**VOLUNTARY PUBLIC SCHOOL
CHOICE PROGRAM
ATTN: CFDA 84.361
U.S. Department of Education
Coordination and Control Branch
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-4725**

Hand-deliver To:
**VOLUNTARY PUBLIC SCHOOL
CHOICE PROGRAM
ATTN: CFDA 84.361
U.S. Department of Education
Coordination and Control Branch
7th & D Streets, SW, Room 3633
Washington, DC 20202-4725**

****Postmark dates will not be accepted. Applications must be received before 4:30 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time) on August 19, 2002.***

SECTION E

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND NOTICES

Estimated Public Reporting Burden

Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs

Notice to All Applicants (Section 427 GEPA)

Important Notice to Prospective Participants in U.S. Department of Education
Contract and Grants Program

Grant Application Receipt Acknowledgement

NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS

Thank you for your interest in this program. The purpose of this enclosure is to inform you about a new provision in the Department of Education's General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) that applies to applicants for new grant awards under Department programs. This provision is section 427 of GEPA, enacted as part of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Pub. L. 103-382).

To Whom Does This Provision Apply?

Section 427 of GEPA affects applicants for new discretionary grant awards under this program. **ALL APPLICANTS FOR NEW AWARDS MUST INCLUDE INFORMATION IN THEIR APPLICATIONS TO ADDRESS THIS NEW PROVISION IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FUNDING UNDER THIS PROGRAM.**

What Does This Provision Require?

Section 427 requires each applicant for funds (other than an individual person) to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its federally assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs.

This section allows applicants discretion in developing the required description. The statute highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation that you may address: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. Based on local circumstances, you can determine whether these or other barriers may prevent your students, teachers, etc. from equitable access or participation. Your description need not be lengthy; you may provide a clear and succinct description of how you plan to address those barriers that are applicable to your circumstances. In addition, the information may be provided in a single narrative, or, if appropriate, may be discussed in connection with related topics in the application.

Section 427 is not intended to duplicate the requirements of civil rights statutes, but rather to ensure that, in designing their projects, applicants for Federal funds address equity concerns that may affect the ability of certain potential beneficiaries to fully participate in the project and to achieve to high standards. Consistent with program requirements and its approved application, an applicant may use the Federal funds awarded to it to eliminate barriers it identifies.

What are Examples of How an Applicant Might Satisfy the Requirement of This Provision?

The following examples may help illustrate how an applicant may comply with section 427.

- (1) An applicant that proposes to carry out an adult literacy project serving, among others, adults with limited English proficiency, might describe in its application how it intends to distribute a brochure about the proposed project to such potential participants in their native language.
- (2) An applicant that proposes to develop instructional materials for classroom use might describe how it will make the materials available on audiotape or in braille for students who are blind.
- (3) An applicant that proposes to carry out a model science program for secondary students and is concerned that girls may be less likely than boys to enroll in the course might indicate how it intends to conduct "outreach" efforts to girls, to encourage their enrollment.

We recognize that many applicants may already be implementing effective steps to ensure equity of access and participation in their grant programs, and we appreciate your cooperation in responding to the requirements of this provision.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE TO PROSPECTIVE
PARTICIPANTS IN U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CONTRACT AND GRANT PROGRAMS**

GRANTS

Applicants for grants from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) have to complete for limited funds.

Deadlines assure all applicants that they will be treated fairly and equally, without last minute haste.

For these reasons, ED must set strict deadlines for grant applicants. Prospective applicants can avoid disappointment if they understand that.

Failure to meet a deadline will mean that an applicant will be rejected without any consideration whatever.

The rules, including the deadline, for applying for each grant are published, individually, in the Federal Register. A one-year subscription to the Register may be obtained by sending \$340.00 to: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402-9371. (Send check or money order only, no cash or stamps.)

The instructions in the Federal Register must be followed exactly. Do not accept any other advice you may receive. No ED Employee is authorized to extend any deadline published in the Register.

Questions regarding submission of applicants may be addressed to:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Washington, D.C. 20202-4725

CONTRACTS

Competitive procurement actions undertaken by the ED are governed by the Federal Procurement Regulation and implementing ED Procurement Regulation.

Generally, prospective competitive procurement actions are synopsisized in the Commerce Business Daily (CBD). Prospective offerors are therein advised of the nature of the procurement and where to apply for copies of the Request for Proposals (RFP).

Offerors are advised to be guided solely by the contents of the CBD synopsis and the instructions contained in the RFP. Questions regarding the submission of offers should be addressed to the Contract Specialist identified on the face page of the RFP.

Offerors are judged in competition with others, are failure to conform to any substantive requirements of the RFP will result in rejection of the offer without any consideration whatever.

Do not accept any advice you receive that is contrary to instructions contained in either the CBD synopsis or the RFP. No ED employee is authorized to consider a proposal which in non-responsive to the RFP.

A subscription to the CBD is available for 208.00 per year via second-class mailing or \$261.00 per year via first class mailing. Information included in the Federal Acquisition Regulation is contained in Title 48, Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter 1 (\$49.00). The foregoing publication may be obtained by sending your check or money order only, no cash or stamps, to:

Superintendent of Documents
U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402-9371

In an effort to be certain this important is widely disseminated, this notice is being included in all ED mail to the public. You may, therefore, receive more than one notice. If you do, we apologize for any annoyance it may cause you.

GRANT APPLICATION RECEIPT ACKNOWLEDGMENT

If you fail to receive the notification receipt within fifteen (15) days from the closing date, call:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
(202) 708-9495

If your application is late, we will notify you that we will not consider the application.

GRANT AND CONTRACT FUNDING INFORMATION

The Department of Education provides information about grant and contract opportunities electronically in several ways:

The Department's Internet Home Page	--	http://www.ed.gov/
The Office of the Chief Financial Officer Home Page	--	http://ocfo.ed.gov/
ED Board Computer BBS` (202) 260-9950		

